MORVICH

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HORSE

Compliments of

Benjamin Block

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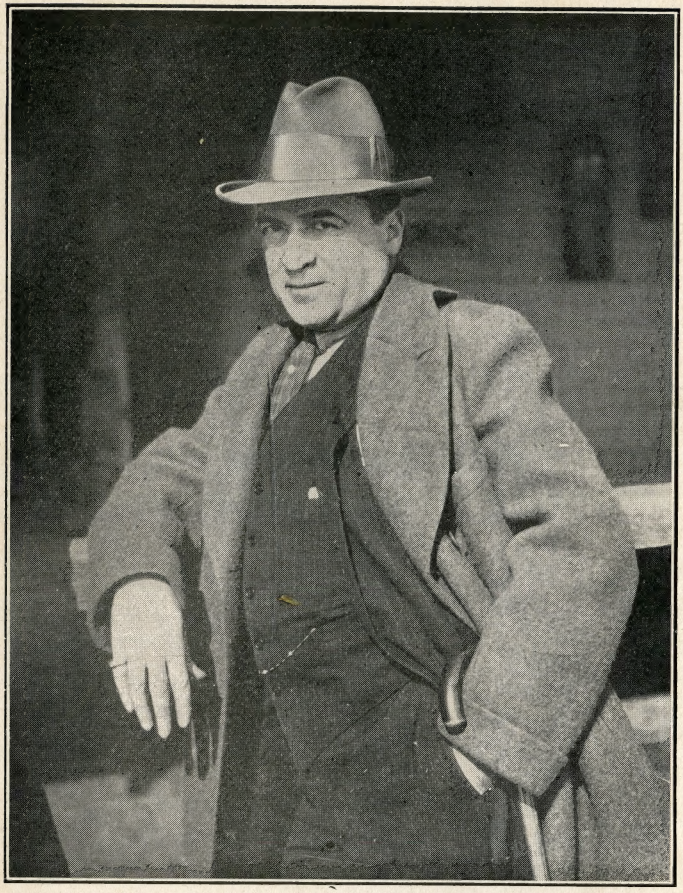

Mr. Benjamin Block, Owner of Morvich

MORVICH

An Autobiography of a Horse

By Gerald B. Breitigam

Illustrated with Portraits

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An Appreciation

The Author wishes to thank Mr. Benjamin Block, owner of Morvich, and Mr. Frederick Burlew, his trainer, for their many courtesies. His thanks also are extended to The New York Globe, in which first appeared the first three parts of the Story of Morvich, not only for permission to republish but also for the splendid manner in which the story originally was presented and displayed. To R. H. McCaw, Walter St. Denis, Dan Lyons and O'Neill Sevier, members of The Globe's staff, thanks are herewith given for advice and suggestion in the preparation of the material. And to Mr. William T. Amis, lover of horses, the Author extends his heartiest thanks for the Introduction.

Dedication

To my wonderful friend, Mr. Benjamin Block, my owner, and whom it is my increasing delight to serve, whose courtesies to me in my work and travel are without number and unstinted, always introducing me to the politiest society, the Senators, Governors, Merchant princes, and most of all to the most beautiful women in the world, whose gracious interest and pride in me, I am free to admit have nerved me to exert myself and prove my worth; to my trainer, Mr. Frederick Burlew, whose ceaseless vigilance and untiring effort to keep me in the fittest condition, and in it all, not forgetting the menu; to my good friend Mr. Gerald B.

Breitigam who so patiently and with such brilliant success took down the copy of my autobiography and is now placing it in permanent form that my friends after me shall know my life; to my friends across the street, who in the end with unfailing courtesy, like true sportsmen to the manner born, have struggled fiercely with me on the track, and who, I may say, are worthy of any foeman's steel, but acknowledged my triumphs; to that vast throng that cover, like a carpet of spring flowers, the galleries and the ground, and whose applause is a far sweeter fragrance to me; to the great sport of the American Turf, and those who are striving to maintain it on the highest plane of the true ethics of sport, and to which standards I commend that it shall hereafter

and forever be maintained, so that all of us good racehorses may appear in honor before our masters and our friends; to my friend Mr. William T. Amis, who, after taking down these words, gave me a big piece of chocolate, patted me gently on the cheek and said, "MORVICH, you are a great horse and a fine fellow," I herewith dedicate this book.

A Tribute to the Horse

"The glory of his nostrils is terrible."

The horse from time immemorial has played an important part in the civilization of the world.

He stands out pre-eminently the king of all beasts. We feel a twinge of regret to call him a beast. The proudest moments of man are when he is astride his favorite steed. The glory of the great generals whose armies have shaken continents would soon fade and perish in the imagination and romantic pride of the world were it not for the magnificent poise and grace of the imperishable equine reared aloft on the pedestal of fame, his proud mane eclipsed only by the golden braid of his

Al Johnson, Jockey, Up On Morvich.
Insert: Mr. Block

master, each typical of their respective majesties.

We never cease to love his handsome form, to look upon his confident stride and to wonder at his strong and graceful step.

Then, too, those kind and friendly eyes which ever bespeak a willing service and a gentle loyalty to his master.

He is recounted among the marvelous works of the Creator. God in his effort to tame the proud and defiant heart of disobedient man, asks, "Who gave to the horse his strength, and who clothed his neck with thunder? He paws in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength.

"He mocks at fear and turns not back from the sword. He is not afraid like the grasshopper. He does not give heed to the rattle of the quiver, the glitter

of the spear and the sword. In defeat he will not hear the sound of the trumphet.

"He smells the battle afar off—the thunder of the captains and the shouting."

Is it any surprise that an heir to whole realms should exclaim: "A horse, a horse —my kingdom for a horse!"

In this age of motive power when so many of the heavy burdens of the faithful horse are being lifted, there should be a concerted effort on the part of man to exhalt and lift up on a higher plane the position of this most wonderful of all animals.

Have we not removed from our shoulders the weights of former years through the marvelous strides of science

and invention? Have we not in our comforts kept pace with progress? Why should we hold in bondage longer this our beautiful friend—the horse? Will the scorpion lash of the cruel master ever cease?

The horse has a higher and richer function and heritage by the side of man in the process of the age.

It is a source of pride to look upon him when he is well kept, sleek and natty. See him prance, bite his bits and pitch his proud head, and with distented nostrils give vent to his feelings of freedom and strength!

There is not a more appreciative animal in the world than the horse. He will respond to every kindness and give in return full measure and running over.

You pat him on the shoulder, smooth

his forehead with gentle stroke and speak kind words to him. Two proud hearts in common!

Then, too, there is the nobler breed with "all the line of his fathers known," the steeds whose pride is in the chase and in the thrill of the track.

The world will never grow so old as to forget the sensation and the glory of the fast moving steed, in the heat of rivalry, as he "trots the air" and causes the earth to sing as he touches it with fleet, limbed and beautiful feet, racing around the course, bending against the rail at the third quarter, mounting as on wings with each lengthened tread, pounding the earth as if it were the soft dalliance of the king's chariot way, stretching his flaming neck as if to nose his challenged right to the goal and the

gong, coming forth in the last lap in the froth and foam and fury of his haste, dashing over the line a victor in the midst of the wild and tumultous throng rending anew the welkin with the din of applause and strident but muffled music of the band!

He comes back before the stand, dancing and prancing. He seems to bow and acknowledge with grateful pause the grand display of effulgent praise. His energy is spent. The victory is won. The fond caress of his master is sweet.

When the great Creator bestowed on man the mastery and companionship of an equine so teachable, sympathetic, proud and so gloriously beautiful and graceful, he meant that man should enjoy the infinite delectation of an estate richly bequeathed but no less a solemn

responsibility assumed. The world notes with pride that great keepers and trainers of these matchless steeds are jealous to protect the world's greatest sport from the waste and depredation of the race track mongrel of former years who not only shamed the world but humbled the horse.

Under the administration of men whose ethics are unblemished and whose honesty is unquestioned, the king of all sports will assume its place for the season under auspices of good omen, with MORVICH to the fore, "whose pace is as swift as light," and whose glory is in his dark eyes, his flowing mane and tread of his noble feet.

WILLIAM T. AMIS.

Morvich—
the Wonder Horse

Part I

COLTHOOD

Well do I remember the day when I was named. Up to that time I had been merely a nameless colt running in pasture beside my mother, Hymir. It was a day of shadows and sunshine, the winter rains had brought the grass of the pasture to a lush green, the ground was spongy beneath my feet, the blood dancing in my veins.

I know now that I must have seemed an awkward sight to the two men who

came down into the wide pasture. But up to that time the stableboys and other humans with whom I had to deal had not paid me much attention. I was not aware that I differed radically in appearance from other colts running by day in that flat country, under the California sunshine, there in Napa County, with now and then a strange salty tang from San Pablo Bay, not many miles distant, borne on the breeze.

They came across the pasture, halting now and then, while one of the pair would point a finger toward one or other of us colts, and the other would assign a name. I edged close to them, for my curiosity was aroused, and from what they said I understood that our owner, Mr. A. B. Spreckels, had neglected to register us until the last moment, and

LEFT TO RIGHT: MR. FREDERICK BURLEW, TRAINER OF MORVICH; MR. BLOCK

that Bill Carroll, our trainer, had brought him to the pasture for the purpose of naming us.

"There's a beauty," said Spreckels, indicating a brown colt running by the side of Salvatrix.

"Yes," said the trainer, "sired by Runnymede. Same as that colt yonder."

He indicated me. Mr. Spreckels regarded me quizzically.

"Not much similarity," he said in a disappointed tone. "Look at that fellow's lumpy knees."

"Yes," said the trainer, shaking his head, "I'm afraid he's the cull of the stable."

"Well, name him Morvich," said Mr. Spreckels. "I've been reading a Russian novel in which the hero, a twisted sort of fellow, bears that name. Perhaps

the colt, Morvich, may come out from behind as the man Morvich did."

Old Bill Carroll shook his head doubtfully. "He'd have to go some," he said.

The beautiful colt who had the same father as I was named Runstar. That was my first indication that I was regarded disparagingly by humans. Later I was to have many far plainer evidences of it. As for Runstar, who had the same father as I, he became the pride of Spreckels' stables while I with my lumpy knees and my awkwardness, was looked down upon more and more. Ah, how I hated him, how I yearned to outdo him in some fashion or other!

"Bide your time," advised Mother Hymir. "If there is anything in those funny legs of yours, your chance to beat

Runstar in the only way open to a thoroughbred will come. He's a good-looking colt, but—beauty is as beauty does."

One other consolation I received was from Mose, a runty little Negro stable boy, himself a cull, who loved me, and used to sneak up to me sometimes with a lump of sugar or an apple core.

"Nothin' in a name, honey boy," he said one day. "Look at dat Johren."

Johren, it seems, was a colt in Harry Payne Whitney's stables at one time, the shaggiest, most unkempt colt imaginable. His coat would not come out even, nor take a shine. When it came time to name him for the thoroughbred register Mr. Whitney recalled an occasion when he had halted at a roadhouse for water for his car. It was a ramshackle place, down-at-the-heels, and the

proprietor appeared in keeping with his hostelry. His name was Johren.

"That colt," said Mr. Whitney, with a disgusted laugh, "Ho! He's Johren."

And Johren, Mose added, became one of the best three-year-olds of his year.

"Keep yo' head up, boy," said Mose. "Yo's got a strong hea't an' a even disposishun. 'At's what yo' needs. Yo' jes wait. Yo'll beat 'em yit."

It was pretty hard for me to keep up my courage during the next year and a half, however, I can tell you. I was foaled at some period during 1919, and automatically became a year old the following New Year's Day. That's the way it is with us horses. The first of the year after our birth makes us yearlings. It was the time I was waiting for. Because, on becoming a yearling, my train-

ing would begin. And deep down within me something kept telling me:

"Courage, my friend. You have it in you to win."

Up to that time not much attention had been paid us colts. And, though slights had been put upon me because of my awkward appearance, yet there had been no great distinction made, for instance, between Runstar and myself. Now, however, I was to feel the iron enter into my soul. Ah, you laugh at that. But, believe me, my friends, when you see us horses come up to the barrier and flash away, and circle that track, you see something more than machines. You see the most perfect of living mechanisms, actuated by indomitable will. I have seen the gamesters leaning over the rail, avarice, greed, despair

in their eyes as we flash by, and if they have souls, why not we?

Now that I was a yearling my dark hour really began. For when I was taken out with Runstar and the other yearlings, and the trainer ran his hands over my legs and chest, my shoulders and neck, he snorted with disgust.

"Well, you can't expect to get a real horse every time. Put him in the second stable."

And into the second stable I went, while Runstar went into the first. Is there anything more disheartening to a young horse? Here, right at the start of his career, he is placed with the cast-offs, the geldings, the selling platers, the horses that have never won a race in many starts or that did not show sufficient fire for stud.

And there I stayed for a year, receiving scant consideration to that lavished upon the promising yearlings in the first stable. I was broken to saddle. It did not take long. And then various exercise boys mounted me and took me out on the great track for trials. That track was a beauty, as finely kept as any racing association track, harrowed continually, cared for like milady's complexion. Such tracks are the rule at all the great racing stables. And around it the boys would send me for a furlong, while some one clocked my time.

I was a disappointment. I could see that. The truth is, I tried so hard to please those boys, to win their love, prancing and playing, that I just could not settle down to business. I would do a furlong in 24, and that is no time at all.

If a young horse does it in 21, then the trainer says: "There is a horse. We must condition him." But if he does it in 24, he says: "Nothing to him. We'll sell him presently for his keep."

Runstar was a beautiful chestnut horse by now. I could see him, now and then, mettlesome, flashing through his furlong in 20. Ah, how I yearned to beat him. And when I would hear the trainer or the stable boys talking about Runstar I would quiver all over with determination. I would beat him yet.

At last came the spring of 1921. I was a two-year-old now, according to horse age, and eligible to race. So was Runstar, the pride of the stables. The pair of us, favorite and cull, were put in the box cars and started on our long journey eastward, over the deserts, over the

mountains, over the rich, green fields of the middle country, to that distant eastern land where the thoroughbred was king.

Because of my defective knees and unimpressive workouts, my masters decided to enter me in the Suffolk Selling Stakes at Jamaica on the opening day, May 6. They would sell me if they could. The betting odds, influenced by reports from California about my trials were 30 to 1 on me, and before the race began they went to 50 to 1. Even then, not even for sentimental reasons, would any of the Spreckels stable connections place a bet upon me.

Jockey Metcalfe was up. He had ridden me once or twice before. I knew him for a cool hand, who would not use the whip unless compelled to. There was

something electrical in the situation. What, I did not know. It was something that affected me alone. I said to myself I would win that race, or die of a broken heart.

Red Tom was the favorite, a chestnut colt by His Majesty out of Burlesque, and owned by William Daniel. There was a field of twelve. Ah, how my heart was afire as we nosed up to the barrier. If only Runstar had been there. But, failing that, I would beat Red Tom. And I kept an eye upon him, and sidled close.

The barrier lifted. A sharp cheer, a spattering of handclapping, and we were off. This was a race, the first of my life. It was not play. There was no time now for prancing to win anybody's heart. I was in a race with eleven good horses. Now was my chance. And,

strangely enough, I seemed to hear the voice of Mose, the old Negro runt of my colthood, saying: "Yo's got a stout heart. Le's go."

I went.

In six strides I had taken the lead from them all. Red Tom, the favorite, chased me three furlongs, then died on his feet. He finished eleventh, next to last, beaten more than twenty-five lengths. Brush Boy, Dolly Varden, and Superillusion ran a good race. But none could touch me. My chance had come at last.

I won by ten lengths.

Part II

UNDEFEATED

What pride was mine, what joy, what elation, as I returned to the stables after winning the Suffolk Stakes that May day back in 1921. Victory is sweet in any case, but doubly sweet it was to me, who had been regarded as the cull of the stables, a horse upon which it was not worth venturing a dollar in that race, even though the odds stood at 50 to 1.

Ah, thought I, prancing a little for very delight in life, now those humans who were my masters would change their opinion of me. Now they would no longer regard me as awkward, so ungainly, with such great knees, that I could never become a racehorse. Their

eyes would be opened. At the very least they would regard me as a freak horse, built not on the trimmest lines, perhaps, yet able to run just the same. For had I not beaten a dozen promising horses, won a purse of $3,950 for my masters, and won by ten lengths?

Alas, I was to learn that once an opinion was formed, humans were slow to change. Later, when men took my career as a text and gossiped about this trait in themselves, I was to hear many stories. Even Rowe, the veteran trainer of Mr. Whitney's stables and the greatest in America, I have heard it said, let young horses go for the price of their keep, which later developed into $50,000 racers. And once a man said:

"Same way in everything. Men can't always tell who's going to be a winner.

Take opera stars. Six years ago Mme. Galli-Curci couldn't get an engagement singing at the Hippodrome because they said she was too homely, and Gatti-Casazza wouldn't pay her even $100 a week at the Metropolitan because, he said, she had no voice. Today she's one of the queens of opera, and he pays her $2,500 a performance."

But this folly of men's minds was not known to me then. I had won. I, the cull of the stables. Now they would accord me that respect, that love, that care so dear to the racer's heart. So, thought I, prancing back to the stables from my first start, my first victory.

Instead there was a little self-gratulation on having won, but no material change in their attitude toward me. I was a poor horse in their opinion. My

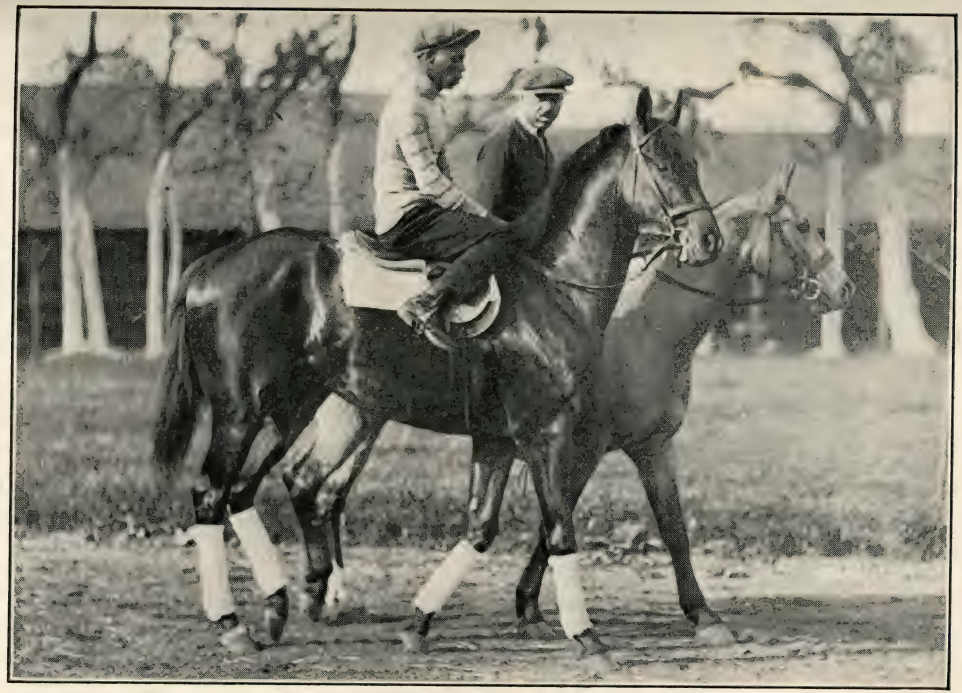
victory merely made it possible to get a little better price for me. For to sell me they still were resolved. And two days later I was sold from the Spreckels' stables to Max Hirsch, an owner and trainer, for $4,500.

That was a bad time for me. For, look you, my friend, one cannot be wounded in his self-respect and take delight in it. Indeed, I moped a bit. Yet hardly had I been moved from one stable to another, there at the Jamaica track, than I was sold again, without having run a race for my second owner. And this time, too, I became more deeply despondent. Why not? I knew from stable conversation that there is a race of men who deal in race horses as in stocks and bonds, for speculative purposes only. I had won a race; it was

worth gambling a bit upon me. And so I was sold to Fred Burlew for $7,500.

And yet when this newest owner sent me to the barrier there at Jamaica May 16, ten days after my first race, there was nothing in my heart except once more a desire to win, to prove myself anew, and so, perhaps, to earn that master's love for which I craved. Jockey Ensor rode me. And I was off to a long lead and never let down. A month later, June 17 to be exact, I ran again under Jockey Keogh at Aqueduct, outclassed the field, and won galloping.

So far I had run against only indifferent horses. They were beautiful, some of them possessing all the graceful lines I was said to lack. But they were not the class of racers, and I yearned to try my mettle against the stars. Ah, if I



MORVICH IN FOREGROUND WITH STABLE BOY UP. OTHER FIGURE THAT OF CHARLEY WHITE, MORVICH'S ASSISTANT TRAINER

could only match myself against Runstar, that pride of the stables where my colthood was spent, that picture horse upon whom was lavished every care, while I went unregarded!

The chance was to come, but not yet.

Meanwhile my race in the Greenfield Stakes had made a strong impression upon a man who never before had owned a horse. This was Benjamin Block, my present owner, who always had been interested in racing, but merely as a spectator. He bought a half interest in me from Mr. Burlew, and later acquired full control, retaining Mr. Burlew as trainer.

I have heard him say he was attracted to me by the way in which I ran the Greenfield. On a slow track, I dashed to the front after being beaten away

from the barrier, and won by five lengths from a speedy field, just galloping at the end.

"I have always wanted to own a horse," I have heard Mr. Block say, "but I did not want one on my hands who was not a real racer. I had many chances to become an owner, of course, but never accepted them until I saw Morvich."

Ah, but that was what I needed. That was the kind of talk to ease me of the growing bitterness so foreign to me. For, naturally, I am of a sunny disposition, and with such talk in my ears how I did run after that. The next three races, all unimportant, I took without the least bit of trouble. They were an ordinary, over-night condition affair at Aqueduct, July 2; the Sparkhill Purse at

Empire City, July 9, and a condition race at the same track, July 20.

The next month I was taken to the Saratoga track. This time I travelled as a thoroughbred should travel, with trainer, exercise boy and special detective. I was becoming a horse of some importance. My races had been only ordinary ones so far, but my owners had high hopes of me. So high, indeed, that on the eve of my first important race, the United States Hotel Stakes, Mr. Block bought out his partner's half interest at a reported price of $35,000. I was a $70,000 horse. I, the cull. What would Runstar say to that? And where was he? Would I meet him at Saratoga? Ah, if I could only find him in a race against me.

Before that race, the United States

Hotel Stakes, began the odds on me in the betting books opened at 8 to 5 and went to 2 to 1. In this liberal price there was an implied slight on me. At least my owner so considered. He resented it. Never a heavy bettor, he now bet $10,000 on me at 8 to 5. When he heard the price had gone to 2 to 1 he sent his commissioners another $10,000, but before it could be placed the price was shortened.

"Bet the money at whatever price you can get," ordered Mr. Block. "I'll teach 'em to recognize a good horse when they see him."

I ran that race, worth close to $10,000, with a similar resolve in my heart. I, too, would teach them to know a good horse when them say him. There were some good horses against me, Kai-Sang,

Oil Man and Sir Hugh, the best of the lot. Pegasus and Sunreigh also were excellent. As I have said, it was my first important race. And, though I got away well from the post, yet I was so much on edge, so eager to win, not to make a mistake, that I took things easy at first, too easy, perhaps, the stands might have considered. I was slow to begin. Ah, but they did not know me. With the field ahead, I came up like a thunder-bolt on the inside, drove through the ruck, took the lead and fought out the last furlong neck-and-neck with Kai-Sang, who had the great Jockey Sande up. Kai-Sang held on well, but I stood the long drive gamely and won.

A week later came the Saratoga Special, worth $9,500, and again I won. It

was a repetition of the former race. Then, for more than two weeks, there was no racing for me. I was being conditioned for the great race of the meet, to be held Aug. 31, the closing day, the Hopeful Stakes.

The day of the great race dawned bright and clear, but the track was reported slow. That was the first sign of luck in a day that was filled with them, for while some racers break their hearts on a slow track I have the wind and the heart to plough through. Call it gameness, call it what you will. I run my best when there are obstacles to be overcome. And, on this point, too, I have heard men talk outside my stall, saying it was so with humans, that those travelled the farthest who travelled the hardest roads in their youth.

Another sign of luck was the shortening of the price against me to 6 to 5 and 13 to 10. But, greatest sign of luck of all, was the announcement that Runstar would be entered against me. At last. At last I would have my chance to fight it out with that young fellow whose handsome graces had won the hearts of the stables where I was born, that favorite of the family in which I had been the ugly duckling.

There were other good horses against me for this race carried a purse of $34,000. Kai-Sang was in again and I must not neglect to identify him as the pride of Mr. Harry Sinclair's Rancocas stables and a fine horse. And there were Bunting and Whiskaway from the Whitney stables; Sunreigh, the Kilmer stable pet; Violinist, Mr. Bud Fisher's

best—good horses all. But Runstar! Ah, he was the only horse in the race for me. The others might as well not have been present.

I started with a terrific pace, and a great roar went up from the stands. There should be no dallying here, no delay on my part while the field went ahead that I might look them over. A terrific pace, and I never drew up. I was never headed, and won easily galloping. And when I passed the judge's stand Runstar was ten lengths behind.

My racing season was nearing an end. We travelled south in style and on Sept. 21 I won the $7,000 Eastern Shore Handicap at Havre de Grace and Nov. 5, at Pimlico, scored my eleventh and last victory in the Pimlico Futurity, winning $42,750, which brought my total win-

nings for the season to $115,285 in eleven races.

Runstar during the same period started nine times, won three races, was third in one, finished unplaced in five. He won a total of $5,301. Compare our records for the season, my friend, those of the pride of the stable and the cast-off, the cull.

But, as I have said, man does not always know beforehand who will be the winner. If he did, why, there would be no race horses.

Part III

DERBY DAY

This is the eve of Derby Day.

I am stabled at Churchill Downs, not far from the city of Louisville, Kentucky. This is the very heart and capital of all the Blue Grass Region where since Daniel Boone and his fellow pioneers first followed the Wilderness Trail through Cumberland Gap from the Eastern Shore, the horse has been king. Through all the dark years when the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds languished in other parts of the country, when legislatures and purity leagues combined to close the great tracks, racing has been kept alive here. For fifty years the annual American classic of the turf, the Kentucky Derby, has been run here. Tomorrow it will be run again and—I will be out to win it.

I, Morvich, the Awkward, the cast-off, the cull of other days.

Where are the others?

Where is Red Tom? Where is Kai-Sang? And, above all, where is Run-star? There is no answer to that question. There can be none. Those picture horses have been left behind in the race. It is I, the cull, who have gone up.

I tell you, my friend, my feelings are rather varied on this occasion. As I stand in my stall, here on the edge of this vast race course, where tomorrow all the fashion and beauty of the South will be gathered under the sunshine, but which tonight is empty and dark and tenanted only by the ghosts of great horses of the past who have run their course and gone on, here I am inclined to solemn thought.

I have no fears for the morrow. I

shall run to win. That is all that counts. If there is a better horse than I, he will know at least that he has been in a horse race. But there is a nameless something stirring in me. I know not how to describe it. Yet I suppose all fighters experience it on the eve of great battles —the veteran of the ring, the soldier in the trench.

Ah, how I thank my stars tonight for the blood that is in me, for from it in all likelihood I derive the equable disposition which has brought me unshaken through all the stress of a tumultuous though brief career. With us thoroughbreds, you know, there is always the danger of too close inbreeding. The great strains are not many. Breeders must watch very carefully to keep them far enough apart, else will the foals be fractious, excitable, prone to sickness of

one kind and another, unbalanced. But, fortunately for me, my sire, Runnymede, and my dame, Hymir, were farther apart in relationship than most.

And I need all that balance, all that equanimity which marks me, now. Up at Jamaica, some ten days ago, when I was being given my early workouts on the track, some stories of the Derby reached me. For one thing, it was common talk among horsemen that the race was too early in the year for three-year-olds, and that those who ran a great race in the Derby broke afterward and were little good for racing again. For another, it was said the distance of a mile and a quarter was too much for me. It is true, I have never raced that distance, but my final workout before we left Jamaica a week ago was over a distance of a mile and a furlong, and I did it in 1:58.

As for the statement that the three-year-olds break after the Derby, that is not as true as might be. Great three-year-olds, if they return to the track for further racing, are placed under increasing handicap. Each race they win, the handicap grows. Rather, therefore, than permit them to be broken by carrying grievous weight, owners frequently withdraw great horses in order to put them to stud and thus perpetuate the strain.

But, as I look through the wire screen of my stall, upon which is the brass plate, bearing my name and those of my dam and sire, out over the silent downs, vast and shadowy and deserted with the great stands looming large beneath the moonlight in the distance, I take heart of hope from a reflection or two. And, principally, I am thinking of what little Mose, that little darky stableboy of my

early days, used to whisper to me: "Yo-all's got de stout hea't, Honey Boy. Dat's wot wins de race."

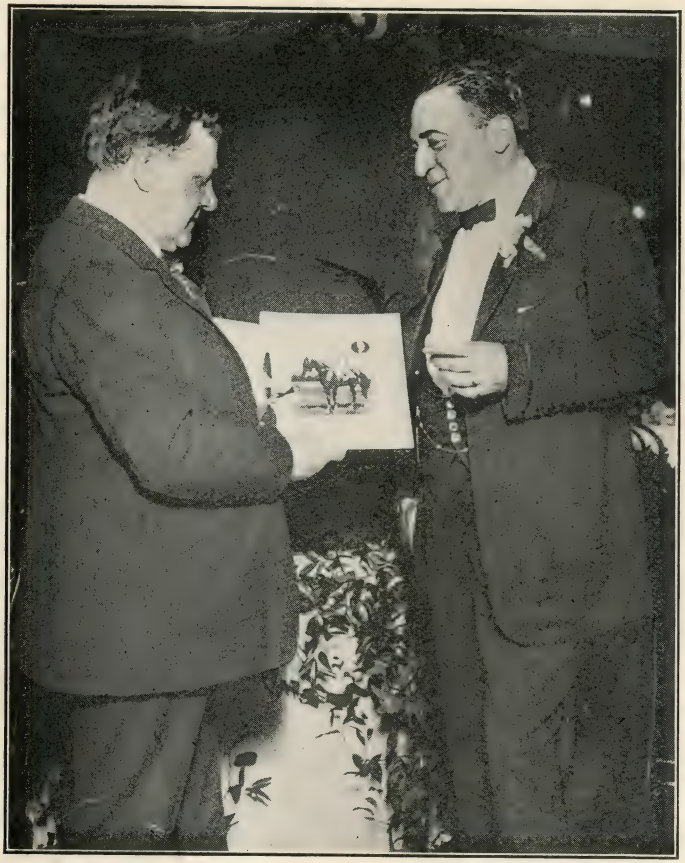
Ah, how true that is. Perhaps you who watch the horses run are of the opinion that the speediest horse wins, other things being even. That is not true. The race is not always to the swift. A racer has got to have speed and endurance, of course, but above all else he must have class. And class is naught more or less than stoutheartedness.

We are out there, racing. One horse leads. Another thunders up behind him. "Come on, boy, come on!" The roar from the stands sweeps out across infield and track. The heart of the leading horse, an animal so sensitive that he thrills to the touch of a lady's glove, beats suffocatingly. That shouting from the stands; that thunder of hoof beats behind. Ah, he cannot stand this! He

must pull up. And, speedier though he may be, the stouter-hearted wins.

And I remember what I once heard of that famous race between Man-o'-War and John P. Grier. Until he met the latter, Man-o'-War had never been given a real race. But when he ran alone against Mr. Whitney's great horse, they thundered neck and neck around the rail and started neck and neck down the home stretch, with not so much room between the tips of their noses as would show daylight. Yet, Man-o'-War won. Speedier? Perhaps. More likely he was merely the stouter-hearted.

Well, I have the class—the stout heart. Never yet have I become fractious or excitable in the paddock before a race. Never have I gone on the track that I did not come to the barrier without giving my jockey any trouble. I have pranced a little at times. Who



Mr. Burlew and Mr. Block at Morvich Victory Dinner

would not, out there in the sunshine, with the band playing, and amidst that gay scene?

Gay scene? It is quiet enough here now. Here and there a light gleams in the darken-shrouded stables. Along the stalls come the occasional snores of exercise and horse boys. Outside I can hear the low voices of my Charley White and little Al Johnson. They are talking about me, I know, though I cannot hear what they say. But let them talk. There is nothing but love in their hearts for me. Charley is my assistant trainer, the man who brought me in a box car from Jamaica to the Downs a week ago. He is a light-colored Negro, and, oh, how he knows and understands a horse.

"Morvich, run!" I heard him say the other day. "Huh. He could beat de Sperits."

As for little Al, he rode me in the Pim-

lico Futurity, my last race last fall. I know him. He knows me. He is not a jockey with a great name as yet, and for that I am thankful. When we run the Derby tomorrow, my friend, I do not want upon me a jockey of thirty years who has made his quarter million. Such a one hears little voices whisper to him when there comes a little hole in the ruck ahead. "Pull wide, pull wide," these little voices say, "you have made your name and fortune. Live to enjoy them. Why take a chance at this late day on being spilled and put out of the game for life?" So he pulls wide, and the race is lost. The horse was willing, but not the boy. No; give me the ambitious youngster, with all the world ahead, name and fortune to be made. He will send me into that hole, his heart as stout as mine, and we will go through.

Their voices die away; naught comes now but an occasional snore from a stableboy, or the movement of some horse in his stall; the scattered lights in the stables go out one by one; the night grows late; it is time for me to give over these reflections and get some sleep against the morrow.

Tomorrow? It will be the greatest day of my career. Whether I climb the heights or go down fighting, I shall run the greatest race there is in me. That I know.

I have never seen a Derby Day, but I know what to expect, for naught else has been talked of this week in the stables. The great folk from all the South, from Mobile, Richmond, New Orleans, Charleston—from all the manors of the Eastern Shore and the baronies of Virginia and Kentucky, where great

horses are bred, will come by motor car and special train. All day long today the sportsmen of the East and West and North, likewise, have been rolling into Louisville. Every hotel room is filled, every boarding house. Private homes have thrown open their hospitable doors to guests. There is feasting and revelry in Louisville tonight.

And tomorrow all these humans will pack the stands, surge through the paddock, and crowd the outside rail. Upon the warm and languid air the bands will pour out their madness. The stands will look like a great and living bouquet, with color running riot. In the boxes of the clubhouse gallery will be the most beautiful women in America. Women and horses—ah! the South knows the combination. Thousands of motor cars will be packed in the outfield, the dust of

many States upon them, for they will have come a long way to Derby Day. And the infield, the prettiest in America, with its blooming flower beds, will bear in flowers, opposite the judges' stand, the name of last year's Derby winner: "Behave Yourself." Will it be "Morvich" next year?

What do I care how great the horses I shall meet ? It is I who go in as favorite. I, Morvich, the cull, the California horse—the first from the Far West to come East and perform well, thus violating the Eastern tradition that California climate cannot produce great horses that can stand the heavier air of these low, hot lands of the East—I go in the favorite.

The hour is late. Battle comes with dawn. Wish me luck. I shall sleep upon my arms.

Part IV

VICTORY

The tumult and the shouting have died away. It is all over. The great Kentucky Derby has been run. And I am back in my stall. Ah, my friend, but you should have been with me in that race.

Day dawned clear and warm, and the track at Churchill Downs was reported lightning-fast. I could see it out there, all brown and smooth, harrowed and picked clean. Beyond it lay the infield. All were deserted in the early morning hours, but during that period there were other matters to think about. The stables where we thoroughbreds entered to run in the Derby and the races preceding were housed were all astir with bustling horse boys, feeding, watering

and grooming us; trainers examining us critically for possible injuries needing attention; owners and others loitering in knots and talking of the coming race.

The race? Yes, for there was only one discussed—the Derby. The entries finally had come down to ten. Some of the best horses were said to be out of it, horses picked to give me the hardest competition. Ah, but is it not always like that? When one has done his best and won, they say: "Yes, but it would have been different, there would have been another tale to tell, if Thus and So had been opposed."

Yet, of the ten of us left, we were the class of three-year-olds. And it was I who was the favorite—I, Morvich, the ugly duckling of the stable where I was born. Favorite, indeed; yet still men

could not bring themselves to believe in me because of my thick foreknees and overlengthy hind legs. "No, he has won his races so far through some freak of fate;" they said, "now he will meet the classiest horses of the American turf. This will be different." And so, favorite though I was, I was held odds on in the betting, at 4 to 5 or even money.

Of this I learned through Mr. Block, my owner, and Mr. Burlew, my trainer. They spoke of it outside my stall.

"All my money is on him to win," declared Mr. Block. "And today, throughout America, wherever there are hearts that beat for gameness, they are betting on Morvich. I venture to say there are millions bet upon him. This will be the greatest moneyed race in history. The ugly duckling is out to win, and those

MORVICH WINNING THE 1922 KENTUCKY DERBY AT CHURCHILL DOWNS, KY., BY AN OPEN LENGTH

who love the man who comes from behind are betting on him."

And Mr. Burlew replied: "He'll win."

Ah, there is a trainer. In conditioning me for this race, he had violated many traditions. Only once, and that a few days before, had he run me the Derby distance of a mile and a quarter. For the ease of my training he had been criticised. And wise and shrewd judge of horses though he is, I knew he was under great strain as the Derby hour approached. There is between sensitive horses and sensitive men a kinship that transcends the need for language. What one feels is known to the other. It was so with us.

Presently, then, the motor cars began arriving, the stands to fill up. And then we were taken to the paddock. The

lesser races were run. Of them I knew nothing, except that horses departed from the paddock, sharp cheers rent the air, the thud of hoofs came back from the track, a gong clanged, and horses returned.

But at length, after long waiting, the Derby hour struck. It was late, nearing five o'clock. But the air was warm, the sun bright.

Ah, my friend, how describe to you the feeling that animated me as little Al Johnson, my jockey, rode me to the barrier? Beautiful women filled the clubhouse boxes. The stands were densely packed, and ablaze with many colors, for these Kentucky women are not afraid to put on gaiety at a fete. And as we moved along the track, it could be seen there were dense masses of men

packing the outer rail to and beyond the quarter pole. In the infield were thousands upon thousands of lesser folk. Indeed, someone said there were 20,000 there, and that Governor Morrow of the State was taking the occasion to address them upon naught other than the subject of myself—my career.

Ah, but when I appeared on the track, you should have heard the clamor. It seemed to me it would rend the heavens above, or shatter my ears. Sweeter music was never heard. How now expect the Governor to hold attention. "Morvich! Morvich!" was the cry from all sections.

And up in the clubhouse, in his box, sat Mr. Block, cold to all outward appearance, but a gleam in his eye all the same. And somewhere near was Mr.

Burlew, surrounded by friends, and the one glimpse I caught of him showed him far from cool, though keeping himself in hand.

That parade to the post. How describe it? One must see such things to know what they are like. There were ten of us, thoroughbreds, the class of the turf, and let nobody tell you we did not know it. What beautiful things they were, those other horses. I could not help admiring them, even envying them a little, their grace and perfection of form. Yet it was I who was Morvich, the Unbeaten; I, the least well-favored of them all. Ah, well, so it goes often in life, I have heard men say.

Ahead of us out of the paddock moved the crimson-coated trumpeter. Behind him went John Finn, a great horse, then

the mare, Startle, then My Play, then I. My Play? Yes, full brother to the great Man-o'-War, the Wonder Horse of 1921, with whom my name has been coupled. And to myself I said: "If you cannot have Man-o'-War to race against, at least you shall have his full brother, and we will see what can be done."

What a horse was My Play to look upon. He filled the eye. He pranced, knowing well the import of his family name. Busy American, heavily bandaged on the nigh foreleg because of a bowed tendon, yet prancing, full of spirit; Surf Rider, so fractious he had to be led to the post—ah, we all knew we were to be in a race. As for myself, I was not at all nervous, I knew what was expected of me, and with teeth crunching the bits, pulling for my head, I went soberly along.

Yet, at the post I wanted to be off at once. This would not do. There had to be perfect alignment. Several times I darted forward. Finally, one of the starter's assistants took my head, and held me thus until the barrier lifted. We were off!

"Boy," said little Al, leaning forward to my ear; "they want us to ride this race to win." He had to hold me in.

Yet the race was won in the first hundred yards. For in that distance I was free and clear of the field, I had the rail, and there could be no jam or piling up the turns.

I covered that first furlong in a little under eleven, killed the field at the start, and took the fight and heart out of all those picture horses. First one and then another of the field would forge ahead

and try to come up with me. But each who thus bid for fame held on but a little while, then fell away. Behind, I could hear whip being plied as we came into the stretch, and I knew those beautiful horses were being given whip and spur in the endeavor to force them up to my race. But no whip ever touched me. And I would have run faster had it been necessary, but little Al never let my head out, even in the stretch, but always held me in. Perhaps he will be criticised for not trying to break the Derby time, but he had orders to ride a "win race" and that he did.

As for breaking records, many a horse has been driven to do that, and has never run again. Last year John P. Grier at the Aqueduct, I have heard it said, was ridden at a terrific pace in his race with

Man-o'-War. On the home stretch there was a time even when he got his nose ahead of the greater horse. But he has never raced since. That pace is killing on a racer.

And so I came home, just galloping, at the end. I had taken the lead, I was never headed, and I won by two lengths.

That is all. It is over now. Whatever else I shall do, whatever laurels I shall receive in other races, cannot compare to this:

That I, the ugly duckling, the horse sold four times before an owner could be found who would put faith in me, ran undefeated through a season and won the Derby crown.

(THE END.)